



SUNSHINE PERIOD

33 Francis St.  
Malden, Mass. 02148  
January 5, 2005

Commissioner Michael Copps  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Commissioner Copps:

We are writing to you regarding the FCC's request for public comments on allowing cellphone use during airline flights. We have already written to Chairman Powell, but we wished to write to you as well, having appreciated your comments on this issue, as reported in a December 18, 2004, editorial in The Boston Globe.

As people who experience daily annoyance from inconsiderate cellphone users on public transit, in restaurants, and in many other public spaces, we are opposed to permitting these devices to be used during airline flights. And having read the FCC's December 15, 2004, press release on the issue, we are doubly concerned: it implies that the granting of permission is a foregone conclusion, without asking whether the supposed convenience of some passengers should outweigh the comfort of others. Indeed, the prospect of having to spend our next flight trapped between people on the phone is practically unbearable.

Your colleague Commissioner Adelstein was quoted in the same editorial as assuming that consumers would "work out the etiquette." We can assure you and him that that will not happen. Unfortunately too many people seem to feel absolutely no concern for the comfort or privacy of others, once they get on their cellphones. We say "privacy" because in close quarters, these people destroy others' ability to converse, read, meditate, or do anything other than be a captive audience. Such people are not responsive to others' requests that they keep their voices down or that they limit the length of their calls. And we are sure you can imagine how much more uncomfortable this situation would be on a plane, when passengers are crammed together with no possibility of escaping for hours on end.

We ask that you bring these concerns to your discussions of this issue, and that you do all you can either to maintain the prohibition on cellphone use during flights or, if that is impossible, to limit strictly the circumstances in which they can be used.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Riley Fast  
  
Paul Fast

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